



For Immediate Release: March 18, 2016

Montgomery County Launches Coalition to Address Community Cat Issues

Derwood, MD – On the evening of March 9, 2016, members of the D.C. Metro area animal welfare community gathered at the Rockville Memorial Library for the kickoff meeting of the Montgomery County Community Cat Coalition. The event, organized by the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) and MCPAW (Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-being), brought together a diverse group (and a packed house) to discuss the formation of a collaborative coalition to address community cat issues.

The assembly featured a panel of experts from Alley Cat Allies, the Humane Society of the United States, Loudoun Community Cat Coalition, Metro Ferals, MCPAW'S Spay-it-Forward program, Rock Creek Cats, and the Washington Humane Society.

The coalition is intended to design and create an innovative, pro-active, community-based program to address issues involving un-owned cats. The issue reaches many groups and can create unnecessary conflict between cat and wildlife advocacy groups, animal control agencies, local government agencies, businesses, and neighbors – just to name a few. For that reason, participation from *all* stakeholders is critical to the success of the coalition.

Co-host of the event and Director of MCASAC, Tom Koenig, said, "This is something I have waited to see happen in Montgomery County for some time. I couldn't be more pleased with the community's response to this event."

MCASAC does not have a Trap Neuter and Return program (humanely trapping stray and feral cats and having them vaccinated, spayed/neutered, and "eartipped" before returning them to their outdoor home) but has instead worked with existing community cat groups such as Rock Creek Cats and Metro Ferals to prevent the unnecessary euthanasia of feral cats. The development of resources such as volunteers, spay and neuter assistance, and funding remain critical to the cause.

Next on the coalition's agenda is to form a steering committee to develop coalition structure and by-laws, address priorities, and recruitment.

About the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center:

The Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC), operated by the Department of Police, Animal Services Division, provides high-standard sheltering and care to the homeless, abused, and neglected animals in our community and ensures the safety and welfare of the county's citizens. We are the County's only open-admission, municipal shelter. Through adoptions, education, outreach, and more, MCASAC serves as a critical community resource to promote and advocate for responsible pet care. Animal Services Officers are on duty seven days a week to investigate citizen complaints and respond to animal emergencies 24 hours a day. For more information, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/asd

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